

Message Text

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SUBJ: NORWEGIAN PREPARE CUBAN AID DEBATE: CUTOFF LIKELY
AFTER 1978

REFS: (A) OSLO 5180, (B) OSLO 0683, (C) OSLO 0838

SUMMARY: IN THE WAKE OF STRONG PUBLIC DISAPPROVAL
OF CUBAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA, THE NORWEGIAN STORTING
WILL SOON DEBATE A NON-SOCIALIST PARTY DEMAND TO STOP
ALL GOVERNMENT AID TO CUBA. THE LABOR GOVERNMENT
OPPOSES AND IMMEDIATE AID CESSATION BUT IS
READY TO ACCEPT AN END TO CUBAN AID WHEN THE PRESENT
PROJECT CONTRACT CONCLUDES IN 1978. THIS IS THE
LIKELY OUTCOME OF A LIVELY CONTROVERSY ON THE
SUBJECT IN THE COMING WEEKS. END SUMMARY.

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1. AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF STRONG PUBLIC DISAPPROVAL OF CUBA'S MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA, NORWAY'S THREE MAJOR NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES HAVE PROPOSED TO THE STORTING THAT NORWEGIAN AID TO CUBA BE STOPPED "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE". THE PROPOSAL IS NOW BEING CONSIDERED BY THE PARLIAMENT'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND WILL PROBABLY BE DEBATED IN THE STORTING SOMETIME NEXT WEEK.

2. THE CONSERVATIVE, CENTER, AND CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S PARTIES ARE RIDING THE WAVE OF DISAPPROVAL TO CUBAN ACTION IN ANGOLA TO REINFORCE THEIR GROWING OPPOSITION TO CUBAN AID. THE CONSERVATIVES STRUCK A STRONG NOT ON THIS THEME DURING THE STORTING FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE IN NOVEMBER. (REFTEL A). THE NON-SOCIALISTS HAVE IN THE PAST ARGUED AGAINST CUBAN AID FOR IDEOLOGICAL REASONS AND ON THE GROUNDS THAT NORWEGIAN AID TO CUBA IS NOT JUSTIFIED ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS. THE FRG'S RECENT DECISION TO STOP CUBAN AID BECAUSE OF CASTRO'S MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA HAS GIVEN THE NON-SOCIALISTS ADDED CAUSE.

3. THE LBOR GOVERNMENT HAS TRIED TO RESPOND TO GROWING PUBLIC SENTIMENT AND TO DIVERT THE NON-SOCIALIST THRUST WITHOUT TYING ITS HANDS IN THE FOREIGN AID FIELD OR LOSING GROUND TO THE LEFT WHICH IS STILL SYMPATHETIC TO CUBA AND THE MPLA. FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND REPLIED TO NON-SOCIALIST CRITICISM ON FEB 4 (REFTEL B) BY SAYING THAT WHILE THE GOVERNMENT DISASSOCIATED ITSELF FROM CUBAN AND OTHER FOREIGN AID PROGRAM AS A POLITICAL WEAPON IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

4. WITH INTEREST IN THE ISSUE INTENSIFYING PRIME MINISTER NORDLI TOOK UP THE CUBAN AID MATTER IN A SPEECH AT NEARBY TONSBORG FEB 21. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOTED AND UNDERSTOOD THE STRONG OPINION AGAINST AID TO A COUNTRY WHICH WAS SENDING TROOPS TO FIGHT ON ANOTHER CONTINENT, HE REITERATED THE POSITION OUTLINED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER.
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ADDRESSING THE NON-SOCIALIST AID CUT PROPOSAL HE SAID HE SAW NO DISAGREEMENT EXCEPT OVER THE PHRASE "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE". FOR THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, THIS MEANS AS SOON AS THE CURRENT HAVANA HARBOUR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IS COMPLETED IN 1978.

5. NORDLI ARGUED THAT NORWAY HAD INVITED AND SIGNED A CONTRACT WITH CUBA AND TO STOP AID NOW WOULD BE TO

BREAK A CONTRACT. AID TO CUBA HAD BEEN HANDLED UNDER SEVERAL NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT'S, INCLUDING A NON-SOCIALIST COALITION ONE, HE POINTED OUT. IN THE 1970 UNCTAD CONFERENCE NORWAY OFFERED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO LDC'S IN HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT AND COSTAL TRANSPORT. CUBA RESPONDED TO THE OFFER; AFTER PROJECT EVALUATION IN 1971-72, THE STORTING APPROVED THE PORJECT IN 1975 UNDER A FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT, WHICH PROVIDES THE MECHANISM FOR ADDITIONAL AID. THE TOTAL COST WILL RUN \$2,550,000. THE PROEJCT, NORDLI SAID, WILL END IN 1978, AND "THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLANS FOR FURTHER AID INITIATIVES."

6. THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED THAT HE HOPED THAT THE HARD REACTION AGAINST CUBA IN THIS CASE ID NOT PRODUCE A REACTION AGAINST THE MPLA AND ANGOLA, WHICH NORWAY HAS RECENTLY RECONGNIZED (OSLO 08289. HE SAID WESTERN DEMOCRACIES MUST NOT CONTINUE TO APPEAR TO DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM NEW NATIONS GIVING OTHERS THE CHANCE TO MOVE IN THERE, AND HE CALLED ATTENTION TO THE WEST'S HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEVELOPMENTS IN LARGE PARTS OF AFRICA AND THE ROLE OF AID IN FOSTERING UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE WEST AND AFRICA.

7. THE LEFT MEANWHILE HAS COUNTERATTACKED AGAINST THE NON-SOCIALIST AID CUT PROPOSAL. BESIDES ARGUING AGAINST BREACH OF CONTRACT, SOCIALIST LEFT PARTY SPOKESMAN FINN GUSTAVSEN HAS NOTED THE PRECEDENT THAT WOULD BE SET BY CUTTING AID TO COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS, POINTING OUT THAT NO ONE TALKED OF CUTTING NORWEGIAN AID TO INDIA DURING ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE PAKISTAN-BANGLADESH CONFLICT. NOR DID ANY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THE NON-SOCIALISTS DISCUSS SEVERING ASSISTANCE TO INDONESIA AFTER TIS INVASION OF TIMOR, HE ADDED, NOTING THAT NON-SOCIALIST SUPPORTERS HAVE SOMETHING AT STAKE WHEN THE STORTING DECISDS SOON UPON FINANCING AND AID FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NORWEGIAN SHIPS FOR INDO- NESIA. GUSTAVSEN ALSO RAMINDED THE GOVERMENT AND THE NON-SOCIALISTSTHAT THEY SUPPORTED US-MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM AND THAT THE CIA ALSO WAS INVOLVED IN ANGOLA.

8. ALL OF THESE ARGUEMENTS ARE LIKELY TO BE REHERSED MANY TIMES IN TE UPCOMING STORTING DEBATE ON CUBAN AID. IN THE END, KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES, INCLUDING CONSERVATIVE PARLIAMENTARY PAUL THYNESS WHO IS LEADING THE NON-SOCIALIST EFFORT, BELEIVE THAT LABOR

AND SV WILL USE THEIR ONE-VOTE STORTING VOTING MARGIN
TO DEFEAT THE PROPOSAL TO CUT CUBAN AID NOW.
IT IS POSSIBLE THT THE LIBERAL PARTY'S TWO VOTES MAY
GO WITH THE SOCIALISTS ON THE ISSUE.
THE GOVERNMENT' POSITION OF ENDING CUBAN AID WHEN THE
HAVANA HARBOR PROJECT ENDS IN 1978IS EXPECTED TO CARRY.
STORTING PRESIDENT AND LABOR LEADER GUTTORM HANSEN
REFLECTED THIS SENTIMENT LATE LAST WEEK WHEN HE SAID
HE IS "CONVINCED THAT NORWEGIAN HELP TO CUBA WILL
CEASE." ONLY THE TIME WAS IN QUESTION. THE PRESENT
CONTRACT SHOULD BE FULFILLED, HE SAID, "BUT NO NEW AID
GIVEN."

9. THIS RESULT WILL BE A VICTORY FOR NON-SOCIALISTS'
EFFORTS TOSTOP CUBAN AID. FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S
STANDPOINT THE ACTION SHOULD NOT SET ANY NEW CRITERIA
FOR FOREIGN AID AND HOPEFULLY WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY
AFFECT PUBLIC AND STROTING OPINION AGAINST FOREIGN
AID GENERALLY WHEN THAT SUBJECT IS DUSCUSSED MORE FULLY
LATERTHIS SPRING.
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